

Claims

1. An authoring method for use in creating an audiovisual product, comprising the steps of:
 - 5 defining a plurality of components, the components implicitly representing functional sections of audiovisual content with respect to one or more raw content objects, and a plurality of transitions that represent movements between the plurality of components;
 - 10 expanding the plurality of components and the plurality of transitions to provide a set of explicitly realised AV assets and an expanded intermediate data structure of nodes and links, where each node is associated with an AV asset of the set and the links
 - 15 represent movement from one node to another; and
 - creating an audiovisual product in a predetermined output format, using the AV assets and the expanded intermediate data structure of the nodes and the links, wherein the audiovisual product is operable to facilitate
 - 20 random number generation.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the defining step comprises defining at least one information component that comprises a reference to a raw content object.
- 25 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the reference denotes a file path to a location where the raw content object is stored.
- 30 4. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the defining step comprises defining at least one choice component comprising a reference to at least one raw content object, and at least one authoring parameter.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the at least one authoring parameter is adapted to control a selection or modification of the at least one raw content object.

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6. The method of claim 4 or 5, wherein the at least one authoring parameter comprises a runtime variable available during playback of the audiovisual product.

10 7. The method of claim 4, 5 or 6, wherein the at least one authoring parameter comprises an authoring-only parameter that will not be available during playback of the audiovisual product.

15 8. The method of any of claims 4 to 7, wherein the choice component comprises a reference to a presentation template and a reference to at least one substitutable raw content object to be placed in the template according to the at least one authoring parameter.

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9. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the defining step comprises defining at least one meta-component representing a set of components and transitions.

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10. The method of claim 9, wherein the at least one meta-component is a procedurally defined representation of the set of components and transitions.

30 11. The method of any preceding claim, wherein each transition represents a permissible movement from one component to another component.

12. The method of any preceding claim, wherein each transition is associated with a triggering event.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the triggering
5 event is an event occurring during playback of the audiovisual product.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the triggering event is receiving a user command, or expiry of a timer.

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15. The method of any preceding claim, further comprising the step of checking expected conformance of the audiovisual product with the predetermined output format, using the plurality of components and the
15 plurality of transitions.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the predetermined output format is a hierarchical data structure having limitations on a number of objects that
20 may exist in the data structure at each level of the hierarchy, and the checking step comprises predicting an expected number of objects at a level and comparing the expected number with the limitations of the hierarchical data structure.

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17. The method of claim 15 or 16, wherein the checking step comprises predicting an expected total size of the audiovisual product, and comparing the expected total size against a storage capacity of a predetermined
30 storage medium.

18. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the expanding step comprises, for each component, building one

or more of the set of explicitly realised AV assets by reading and manipulating the one or more raw content objects.

5 19. The method of any preceding claim, wherein:
the defining step comprises defining at least one choice component comprising a reference to a plurality of raw content objects and at least one authoring parameter; and

10 the building step comprises:
selecting one or more raw content objects from amongst the plurality of raw content objects using the at least one authoring parameter; and
combining the selected raw content objects to form
15 one of the AV assets.

20. The method of claim 19, comprising repeating the selecting and combining steps to automatically build a plurality of the explicitly realised AV assets from the
20 one of the components.

21. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the expanding step comprises:
creating from each one of the plurality of components
25 one or more explicitly realised AV assets to provide the set of AV assets;
creating the expanded intermediate data structure wherein each node represents one AV asset of the set; and
creating a set of links between the nodes.

30 22. The method of any preceding claim, wherein each transition is associated between first and second components, and creating the set of links comprises

evaluating each transition to create one or more links, each of the links being between a node created from the first component and a node created from the second component.

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23. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the expanding step comprises evaluating at least one of the transitions to create exit logic associated with at least one first node, evaluating one of the components to create entry logic associated with at least one second node, and providing a link between the first and second nodes according to the entry logic and the exit logic.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein at least one of the transitions is associated with a triggering event, and the expanding step comprises evaluating the triggering event to determine the exit logic associated with the at least first one node.

25. The method of any preceding claim, further comprising the step of checking expected conformance of the audiovisual product with the predetermined output format, using the AV assets and the expanded intermediate data structure of nodes and links.

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26. The method of claim 25, wherein the predetermined output format is a hierarchical data structure having limitations on a number of objects that may exist in the data structure at each level of the hierarchy, and the checking step comprises predicting an expected number of objects at a level and comparing the expected number with the limitations of the hierarchical data structure.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the checking step comprises predicting an expected total size of the audiovisual product, and comparing the expected total size
5 against a storage capacity of a predetermined storage medium.

28. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the AV assets have a data format specified according to the
10 predetermined output format.

29. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the AV assets each have a data format according to the predetermined output format, whilst the raw content
15 objects are not limited to a data format of the predetermined output format.

30. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the predetermined output format is a DVD-video specification.
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31. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the AV assets each comprise a video object, zero or more audio objects, and zero or more sub-picture objects.

25 32. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the AV assets each comprise at least one video object, zero to eight audio objects, and zero to thirty-two sub-picture objects, according to the DVD-video specification.

30 33. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the creating step comprises creating objects in a hierarchical data structure defined by the predetermined output format with objects at levels of the data structure, according to

the intermediate data structure of nodes and links, and where the objects in the hierarchical data structure include objects derived from the explicitly realised AV assets.

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34. The method of any preceding claim, wherein the predetermined output format is a DVD-video specification and the creating step comprises creating DVD-video structure locations from the nodes of the expanded
10 intermediate data structure, placing the explicitly realised AV assets at the created structure locations, and substituting the links of the expanded intermediate data structure with explicit references to the DVD-video structure locations.

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35. An authoring method for use in creating at least one of an audiovisual product or a DVD-video product, comprising the steps of:

creating a plurality of components representing
20 parameterised sections of audiovisual content, and a plurality of transitions representing movements between components;

expanding the plurality of components and the plurality of transitions to provide a set of AV assets and
25 an expanded data structure of nodes and links, where each node is associated with an AV asset of the set and the links represent movement from one node to another; and

creating a DVD-video format data structure from the AV assets, using the nodes and links, wherein the
30 audiovisual product or DVD-video product is operable to facilitate random number generation.

36. The method of claim 35 or 36, comprising creating at least one information component comprising a reference to an item of AV content.

5 37. The method of claim 35, comprising creating at least one choice component comprising a reference to at least one item of AV content, and at least one parameter for modifying the item of AV content.

10 38. The method of claim 37, wherein the choice component comprises a reference to a presentation template and a reference to at least one item of substitutable content to be placed in the template according to the at least one parameter.

15 39. The method of claim 37 or 38, wherein the choice component comprises at least one runtime variable available during playback of an audiovisual product in a DVD player, and at least one authoring parameter not
20 available during playback.

40. The method of any of claims 35 to 39, comprising creating at least one meta-component representing a set of components and transitions.

25 41. The method of any of claims 35 to 40, wherein each transition represents a permissible movement from one component to another component, each transition being associated with a triggering event.

30 42. The method of claim 41, wherein a triggering event includes receiving a user command, or expiry of a timer.

43. The method of any of claims 35 to 42, wherein the expanding step comprises:

- creating from each one of the plurality of components
5 one or more AV assets to provide the set of AV assets;
- creating the expanded data structure wherein each node represents one AV asset of the set; and
- creating a set of links between the nodes.

10 44. The method of claim 37 or any claim dependent thereon, wherein the expanding step comprises evaluating each choice component to create a plurality of AV assets according to each value of the at least one parameter.

15 45. The method of claim 44, wherein evaluating each choice component comprises creating entry logic associated with at least one node and/or evaluating at least one transition to create exit logic associated with at least one node, and providing a link between a pair of nodes
20 according to the entry logic and the exit logic.

46. The method of any of claims 35 to 45, comprising the step of checking expected conformance with the DVD-video format using the created components and transitions.

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47. The method of any of claims 35 to 40, comprising the step of checking expected conformance with the DVD-video format using the set of AV assets and the expanded data structure of nodes and links.

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48. An authoring method for use in creating an audiovisual product according to a DVD-video specification, comprising the steps of:

generating a set of AV assets each comprising a video object, zero or more audio objects and zero or more sub-picture objects, and an expanded data structure of nodes and links, where each node is associated with one AV asset
5 of the set and the links represent navigational movement from one node to another; and

creating a DVD-video format data structure from the set of AV assets, using the nodes and links;

the method characterised by the steps of:

10 creating a plurality of components and a plurality of transitions, where a component implicitly defines a plurality of AV assets by referring to a presentation template and to items of raw content substitutable in the presentation template, and the plurality of transitions
15 represent navigational movements between components; and

expanding the plurality of components and the plurality of transitions to generate the set of AV assets and the expanded data structure of nodes and links,

wherein the audiovisual product is operable to
20 facilitate random number generation.

49. A storage or recording medium storing computer executable instructions for performing the method of any of claims 1 to 34.

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50. A storage or recording medium storing computer executable instructions for performing the method of any of claims 35 to 47.

30 51. A storage or recording medium storing computer executable instructions for performing the method of claim 48.

52. A storage or recording medium storing an audiovisual product authored according to the method of any of claims 1 to 34.

5 53. A storage or recording medium storing an audiovisual product authored according to the method of any of claims 35 to 47.

54. An optical disk recording medium having recorded
10 thereon an audiovisual product authored according to the method of claim 48.

55. An authoring method substantially as described herein with reference to and/or illustrated in any of the
15 accompanying drawings.

56. An authoring method for use in creating a DVD-video product substantially as described herein with reference to and/or as illustrated in any of the
20 accompanying drawings.

57. An authoring method for use in creating an audiovisual product according to a DVD-video specification substantially as described herein with reference to and/or
25 as illustrated in any of the accompanying drawings.

58. A method as claimed in any preceding claim wherein the audiovisual product comprises data representing a video sequence and a number of associated
30 data each having a corresponding command to be invoked in response to at least one event and data to derive a first output value from or associated with an invoked command.

59. A method as claimed in claim 58 wherein the data representing the video sequence comprises a plurality of data structures; each of the data structures being associated with a respective one of the corresponding
5 commands.

60. A method as claimed in claim 59 in which the plurality of data structures comprises a plurality of Group-of-Pictures structures.

61. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 60 in
10 which the associated data comprises at least a command to influence the operation of at least one of a navigation engine and a presentation engine.

62. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 61 in which the corresponding commands comprise associated
15 values used to produce the first value.

63. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 62 in which the corresponding commands comprise respective navigation commands associated with data representing a further video sequence.

20 64. A method as claimed in claim 63 in which the navigation commands retrieve the data representing the further video sequence and cause the presentation engine to derive the further video sequence from the data representing the further video sequence.

25 65. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 64 in which the means to derive the first value comprises a register arranged to store a time varying value during the output of the video sequence by the presentation engine.

66. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 65 in which the register is a GPRM register set to counter mode.

67. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 66 in which the means to derive the first value comprises a
5 combiner to combine the time varying value of the register with data associated with the invoked command.

68. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 67 in which the combiner comprises an adder to add the time varying value of the register to the data associated with
10 the invoked command.

69. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 68 in which the means to derive the first value further comprises means to derive the first value from an initialisation value.

70. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 68 in which the initialisation value is generated by a random
15 number generator.

71. A method as claimed in any of claims 58 to 70 in which the means to generate a sequence of values from the
20 first value.

72. A method as claimed in claim 71 in which the means to generate the sequence comprises means to generate the sequence with a predeterminable number of non-repeating values.

73. A method as claimed in either of claims 71 and 72 in which the means to generate the sequence comprises a
25 calculator to perform an iterative operation to calculate the values of the sequence.

74. A method as claimed in claim 73 in which iterative operation calculates $r_{i+1}=ar_i+b \bmod c$, where a and b are constants, r_1 is the first value and c is prime.

75. A method as claimed in any of claims 1 to 57 further comprising the step of creating or obtaining data representing a video sequence and a number of associated data each having a corresponding command to be invoked in response to at least one event and data to derive a first output value from or associated with an invoked command.

76. A method as claimed in claim 75 wherein the step of creating or obtaining the data representing the video sequence comprises creating or obtaining a plurality of data structures; each of the data structures being associated with a respective one of the corresponding commands.

77. A method as claimed in claim 76 in which the step of creating or obtaining the plurality of data structures comprises creating or obtaining a plurality of Group-of-Pictures structures.

78. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 77 in which the step of creating or obtaining the associated data comprises the step of creating or obtaining at least a command to influence the operation of at least one of a navigation engine and a presentation engine.

79. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 78 in which the step of creating or obtaining the corresponding commands comprise the step of creating or obtaining associated values used to produce the first value.

80. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 79 in which the step of creating or obtaining corresponding commands comprise the step of creating or obtaining respective navigation commands associated with data
5 representing a further video sequence.

81. A method as claimed in claim 80 in which the step of creating or obtaining the navigation commands comprises the step of creating or obtaining commands to retrieve the data representing the further video sequence and cause the
10 presentation engine to derive the further video sequence from the data representing the further video sequence.

82. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 81 in which the step of creating means to derive the first value comprises the step of creating or obtaining a register
15 arranged to store a time varying value during the output of the video sequence by the presentation engine.

83. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 82 in which the register is a GPRM register set to counter mode.

84. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 83 in
20 which the step of creating or obtaining means to derive the first value comprises the step of creating or obtaining a combiner to combine the time varying value of the register with data associated with the invoked command.

25 85. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 84 in which the step of creating or obtaining a combiner comprises the step of creating or obtaining an adder to add the time varying value of the register to the data associated with the invoked command.

86. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 85 in which the step of creating or obtaining means to derive the first value further comprises the step of creating or obtaining means to derive the first value from an
5 initialisation value.

87. A method as claimed in claim 86 in which the step of obtaining or creating means to derive the first value from an initialisation value comprises the step of generating the initialisation value using a random number
10 generator.

88. A method as claimed in any of claims 75 to 86 further comprising the step of creating or generating means to generate a sequence of values from the first value.

15 89. A method as claimed in claim 88 in which the step of creating or obtaining means to generate the sequence comprises the step of obtaining or creating means to generate the sequence with a predeterminable number of non-repeating values.

20 90. A method as claimed in either of claims 88 and 89 in which the step of creating or obtaining means to generate the sequence comprises the step of creating or obtaining a calculator to perform an iterative operation to calculate the values of the sequence.

25 91. A method as claimed in claim 90 in which step of creating or obtaining a calculator to perform the iterative operation comprises the step of creating or obtaining means to calculate $r_{i+1} = ar_i + b \bmod c$, where a and b are constants, r_1 is the first value and c is prime.

92. A data processing system comprising a reader to read data representing a video sequence and a number of associated data each having a corresponding command; a presentation engine for outputting the video sequence derived from the data representing the video sequence, a navigation engine, responsive to an event, to invoke one of the corresponding commands according to the output of the video sequence; and means to derive a first value from the invoked command of the corresponding commands.

93. A data processing system as claimed in claim 92 in which the data representing the video sequence comprises a plurality of data structures; each of the data structures being associated with a respective one of the corresponding commands.

94. A data processing system as claimed in claim 93 in which the plurality of data structures comprises a plurality of Group-of-Pictures structures.

95. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 94 in which the associated data comprises at least a command to influence the operation of at least one of the navigation engine and the presentation engine.

96. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 95 in which the corresponding commands comprise associated values used to produce the first value.

97. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 96 in which the corresponding commands comprise respective navigation commands associated with data representing a further video sequence.

98. A data processing system as claimed in claim 97 in which the navigation commands retrieve the data representing the further video sequence and cause the presentation engine to derive the further video sequence
5 from the data representing the further video sequence.

99. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 98 in which the means to derive the first value comprises a register arranged to store a time varying value during the output of the video sequence by the
10 presentation engine.

100. A data processing system as claimed in claim 99 in which the register is a GPRM register set to counter mode.

101. A data processing system as claimed in either of claims 99 and 100 in which the means to derive the first
15 value comprises a combiner to combine the time varying value of the register with data associated with the invoked command.

102. A data processing system as claimed in claim 101 in which the combiner comprises an adder to add the time
20 varying value of the register to the data associated with the invoked command.

103. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 102 in which the means to derive the first value further comprises means to derive the first value from an
25 initialisation value.

104. A data processing system as claimed in claim 103 in which the initialisation value is generated by a random number generator.

105. A data processing system as claimed in any of claims 92 to 104 further comprising means to generate a sequence of values from the first value.

106. A data processing system as claimed in claim 105 in
5 which the means to generate the sequence comprises means to generate the sequence with a predeterminable number of non-repeating values.

107. A data processing system as claimed in either of claims 105 and 106 in which the means to generate the
10 sequence comprises a calculator to perform an iterative operation to calculate the values of the sequence.

108. A data processing system as claimed in claim 107 in which iterative operation calculates $r_{i+1} = ar_i + b \text{ mod } c$, where a and b are constants, r_1 is the first value and c
15 is prime.

109. A storage medium comprising data representing a video sequence and a number of associated data each having a corresponding command; and data to derive a first value from one of the corresponding commands in response to an
20 event.

110. A storage medium as claimed in claim 109 in which the data representing the video sequence comprises a plurality of data structures; each of the data structures being associated with a respective one of the corresponding
25 commands.

111. A storage medium as claimed in claim 110 in which the plurality of data structures comprises a plurality of Group-of-pictures structures.

112. A storage medium as claimed in claim 111 in which the associated data comprises at least a command to influence the operation of at least one of a navigation engine and a presentation engine.

5 113. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 109 to 112 in which the corresponding commands comprise respective navigation commands associated with data representing a further video sequence.

114. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 109 to
10 113 in which the navigation commands retrieve the data representing the further video sequence and cause the presentation engine to derive the further video sequence from the data representing the further video sequence.

115. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 109 to
15 114 further comprising a command to arrange for a register to produce a time varying value during output of the video sequence by the presentation engine.

116. A storage medium as claimed in claim 115 in which the command to arrange for the register to produce the time
20 varying value comprises a command to cause a GPRM to assume a counter mode.

117. A storage medium as claimed in either of claims 115 and 116 further comprising data to derive a first value, in response to an event, from one of the corresponding
25 commands.

118. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 115 to 117 in which the data to derive the first value further comprises data to derive the first value from an initialisation value.

119. A storage medium as claimed in claim 118 in which the initialisation value is generated by a random number generator.

120. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 115 to
5 119 further comprising data to generate a sequence of values from the first value.

121. A storage medium as claimed in claim 120 in which the data to generate the sequence comprises data to generate a
10 sequence comprising a predeterminable number of non-repeating values.

122. A storage medium as claimed in either of claims 120 and 121 in which the data to generate the sequence comprises a command to perform an iterative operation to
15 calculate the values of the sequence.

123. A storage medium as claimed in claim 122 in which the iterative operation calculates $r_{i+1} = ar_i + b \bmod c$, where a and b are constants, r_1 is the first value and c is prime.

124. A storage medium as claimed in any of claims 109 to
20 123, in which the medium is a DVD disc or other optical disc.

125. A data processing system comprising means to play an interruptible or skipable video sequence; and a random number generator for generating a random number associated
25 with an interruption of the interruptible or skipable video sequence.

126. A data processing method comprising the steps of playing an interruptible or skipable video sequence; and

generating a random number associated with an interruption of the interruptible or skipable video sequence.

127. A data processing system substantially as described herein with reference to and/or as illustrated in the
5 accompanying drawings.

128. A storage medium substantially as described herein with reference to and/or as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.